1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

not, they say, what would the poor pigs have to eat? Pigs are normally fed on the used grain, unless it is rice *chi*, when the soused grain is eaten by humans. The Lepchas believe that *chi* has medicinal qualities, and especially that it is a protection against chills; it is always given to invalids. They start drinking it from the moment that they can walk and continue all their lives. It does not seem to me to be strong enough to have any deleterious effect; except for very young children and a few unstable adults, *chi* does not produce any of the usual stigmata of drunkenness. Lepchas are very conscious of the risk of drink producing quarrelling; in the myth which tells of the origin of *chi*[8] the original yeast was stolen from an old woman who put the curse of quarrelsomeness on it. In point of fact I heard practically no quarrelling at feasts, though people became loud-mouthed, and more shameless in speech than ever, and a couple of men, Dumbi and Katel, used to get maudlin and say how miserable they were and threaten suicide. Unconsciousness induced by drink is unheard of, and so is physical incapacity; but at a feast people usually sleep where they are and only go home in the morning. Drink is mellowing, soothing and pleasant, rather than stimulating and exciting.

Fish is occasionally caught and eaten boiled, as a relish, but not very often. Meat is somewhat of a luxury, and on the whole people do not kill animals except as a sacrifice or when giving a big feast. There are, however, some exceptions to this; Tempa, who had a number of oxen and not very much grain, killed a couple of his cattle and exchanged the meat for the grain he needed. Fowls, wild birds and goat meat are eaten fresh; but beef and pork are preferred high; according to the weather the meat is kept from four days in the hottest season to a fortnight or longer in the coldest weather, before it is considered to be at its most tasty. Only if meat is maggoty will it be thrown away unused. Dead domestic animals and carrion found in the jungle will be eaten unless putrid. Meat is nearly always boiled; and sausages are made from the intestines of bigger animals which are cleaned and stuffed with the edible internal organs chopped fine together with flavouring herbs. These sausages are always made immediately after an animal has been killed. Another favourite form of relish is bullock skin which has been exposed to the sun and then boiled for a very long time until the inside fat is tender; it is eaten cold. There is a certain amount of variety in the manner

[8] See Appendix IV: The Sacred story of the origin of marriage.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

they have learnt to overcharge already, and use extortion in dealing, as is the custom with the people of the plains; but it is clumsily done, and never accompanied with the grasping air and insufferable whine of the latter.

"A more interesting and attractive companion than the Lepcha I never lived with: cheerful, kind, and patient with a master to whom he is attached; rude but not savage, ignorant and yet intelligent; with a simple resource of a plain knife he makes his house and furnishes yours, with a speed, alacrity, and ingenuity that while away that well-known long hour when the weary pilgrim frets for his couch. In all my dealings with these people they proved scrupulously honest. Except for drunkenness and carelessness I never had to complain of any of the merry troop; some of whom, bare-headed and barelegged, possessing little or nothing save a cotton garment and a long knife, followed me for many months on subsequent occasions, from the scorching plains to the everlasting snows. Ever foremost in the forest or on the bleak mountain, and ever ready to help, to carry, collect or cook, they cheer on the traveller by their unostentatious zeal in his service, and are spurs to his progress."

HOOKER, 1854. A very accurate estimate.

A sentimental Colonel sums up the Lepchas.

"What or wheresoever might have been their original source, the Lepchas here appeared in the most simple, primitive state, living in the midst of the vast, wild, magnificent forests, old as the hills themselves, and, as I think, I mention to you, each family residing by itself, having no villages or communities, and but little intercourse with each other; thus they dwelt in pretty cottages, around which they cultivated their plot of ground. Their religion was particularly simple; they believed in one Good Spirit, and in innumerable evil spirits; to the former they conceived their worship due, and to Him they offered their prayers and thanksgivings; the latter they considered prowled about, and haunted every spot; to them they attributed whatever

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 13

Economics

MOST books dealing with primitive peoples contain at least one depressing chapter on the evils resulting from European contact, either through missionaries, education, or trading; but in this particular case the British Government, which has indeed made far too many mistakes in India, can be held completely blameless, in view of the fact that Sikkim is an independent state; and although one or two missionaries have been allowed to work in the country they have so far not been permitted to carry on their activities in Jongu. But every piece must have its villain; and in Jongu he is the local money-lender.

Although the people are very lightly taxed, the provision of the actual cash necessary for this purpose has introduced a complicating factor, for prior to the introduction of direct taxation the Lepchas depended entirely upon barter for such few of their needs as they could not themselves produce. Indeed, they still use only this system in dealings among themselves. Suppose, for instance, that a man has a surplus of grain at the end of the season. He does not sell it, but either makes it into *chi* or loans it to some fellow-villager who may be short of food. If the borrower repays the loan within one year no interest is charged: otherwise fifty per cent is added to the principal when the loan is repaid—in kind, of course. In return for the use of plough oxen it is usual to give the lender eight pounds of grain per day; but if a bullock is required for a sacrifice or ceremony it is usual to repay the loan in kind. If this cannot be done for some considerable time the borrower usually takes a chicken and some *chi* to the lender, but apart from this no interest is charged.

114 323 /896/ In this connection, to be sure, I must supplement the assertion concerning the pottery of the Lepcha which is found in G. Gorer's Himalayan Village (London, 1938), p. 67. As is stated in the above work, the generation of Lepchas living today in the reservation of Zongu has no knowledge of the art of pottery. Consequently copper, brass and porcelain pots of Nepalese, Chinese or even Western origin are used in their households; this statement corresponds to the observations I made among some of the Lepchas living outside the reservation. In addition, however, I was also able to find out that only two generations ago the art of pottery was practiced by a few men experienced in this trade, who on their part supplied the other [437] tribe members with the products of their work by way of barter. Their activity, to be sure, seems to have been limited to the manufacture of a type of vessel which was formerly used among the Lepchas. [415] These vessels called Tang ling fyŭ tyók generally had no handle and a short neck, and were rounded out most in the bottom third; at their broadest point they were about 30 centimeters in diameter. They were made of clay without the aid of a potter's wheel and were then baked. A few of these vessels are reputedly in use in a few remote places in Sikkim.

172 764 Also, the idea that the potsherds might come from urns or grave goods should not be completely disregarded. Should this assumption prove to be correct, then it is possible that the former settlers were not Lepchas, for insofar as I have been able to ascertain on the basis of my investigations of the old burial practices of the Lepchas, cremation of the dead and disposal of the ashes in urns or the practice of placing jugs containing food in the grave was not customary among the Lepchas. (9)

9. Cf. R. Nebesky de Wojkowitz, "Ancient funeral ceremonies of the Lepchas," Eastern Anthropologist (Lucknow), 5, (1951).

4. Supplement

172 Only a short time after this article had gone to press, I succeeded in obtaining a few of the potsherds discovered in the region of Daramdin. In the majority of cases these were small fragments with edges that had already been greatly worn down. They consisted of clay shot through with mica. They vary according to the